

SAMPLE LETTER:

[Subject] Weigh in on HHS Appropriations markups today!

[DATE]

LEGISLATOR NAME

LEGISLATOR BUILDING ADDRESS

Washington DC 20510

Dear [Senator/Representative NAME,]

As a constituent in [enter city or state here], and [select one: person with a congenital heart defect, / the parent of a child with a congenital heart defect, / medical professional caring for children with congenital heart defects,] I am writing to urge you to support funding of congenital heart disease surveillance as outlined by the provisions in the recently enacted health reform law by telling the chair of the appropriations committee today!

Congenital heart defects are the most common birth defect. Unfortunately, [I am one of the nearly / My child is one of the nearly / my patients are among the nearly] 1 in 100 children born with a heart defect each year. As a chronic disease often requiring multiple surgeries and life-long specialized care, heart defects can run a high health care cost. Further understanding of this disease through research and surveillance will improve outcomes and reduce the burden on our health care system.

[Insert 2-3 personal sentences (remember – short is better)! If appropriate, you may wish to choose from the following bullets:

- When I last visited your office in [insert Washington DC or location of in-district office], you indicated your support for improved research and data collection for congenital heart disease. Thank you.
- When I last contacted your office by [phone/email] your response indicated that you support for improved research and data collection for congenital heart defects. Thank you.
- During this meeting, you/he/she indicated your support for the inclusion of appropriate funding in the 2011 appropriations bill.

- During this meeting you/he/she indicated you would get back to be about support for the inclusion of appropriate funding in the 2011 appropriations bill. I encourage you to reconsider.
- Improving data collection will help provide better insight into congenital heart disease across the general population, and across the life span. This will drive research, prevention and treatment strategies ultimately leading to better outcomes, more productive lifestyles and a reduced burden on the healthcare system.
- This is important to me because:

The timing is critical. The House Appropriations Committee's Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS) and Educations Subcommittee is scheduled to mark-up the FY-2011 Bill Today! The Senate Subcommittees will follow shortly.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to contact LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Obey or Ranking Member Tiahrt/Chairman Harkin or Ranking Member Cochran, I encourage you to request a total of \$7.25 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to support data collection to better understand CHD prevalence and to assess the public health impact of CHD, including \$3.75 million for a pilot adult surveillance system and \$3.5 million to add CHD into the existing birth defects surveillance system.

On behalf of [myself/ my child/ my patients,] and the nearly two million American children and adults with CHD alive today, thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Contact Information]